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My Note Book.



PARIS is much amused just now over the circumstances which led to the destruction of Jacquet's aquarelle, "Portrait of a Bagdad Jewish Stallkeeper," in the Water Color Exhibition. It was an unflattering but unmistakable likeness of Alexandre Dumas; and his son-in-law, Mr. Lipmann, hearing of it, rushed to the gallery and took the law into his own hands by smashing the glass and running his stick through the picture in several places. In the mean while Dumas, unaware of Mr. Lipmann's action, obtained an order for the removal of the portrait, and it is said has begun an action for libel, while a cross-action is threatened by Jacquet for the destruction of the picture. The origin of the trouble is thus explained: Jacquet had let the famous novelist buy at a low price his painting "La Première Arrivée"—a Louis Quinze subject exhibited in the Salon three years ago—because of the honor of having it permanently, as he supposed, exhibited in a famous gallery, and he was enraged to find that Dumas had sold it to a dealer at an increased valuation.

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THE incident calls to mind many similar instances of artists' revenge. During the French Revolution Girodet received an order from Barras to paint the portrait of his favorite, the notorious Mlle. Lange. When it was finished Barras was dissatisfied with the price, and to avoid paying it gave as an excuse that it was not a good likeness. Girodet took back the picture and promised to paint another portrait of the young person which everybody would recognize. He kept his word. At a public exhibition held a few months later, no picture attracted more attention than Girodet's portrait of Mlle. Lange as Danaë in the "original costume;" only the classical "shower of gold" was replaced by a shower of silver crowns and copper coins. Barras of course did not let it remain in the gallery; but it was there long enough to be seen by thousands of people and to give the painter an exquisite revenge.

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HORACE VERNET revenged himself on old Rothschild of Paris in a way very like that recently adopted by Jacquet. The millionaire intended to have his portrait painted by Vernet, but thinking the latter's charge exorbitant abandoned the idea. The artist vented his spleen by representing Rothschild in his large picture "La Smala," now in Versailles, in the guise of an old usurer who leaves his wife and family to be trodden under foot by frightened cattle while he is occupied in counting his bags of gold. Of course nothing could be more foreign to the character of the Rothschilds than this cruel insinuation of indifference to kith and kin; but a libeller with the brush, seeking to gratify a personal spite, is not likely to show more compunction than one who uses the pen for the same purpose.

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A REFRACTORY nobleman who refused to pay for a portrait he had ordered was brought to terms by Hogarth by the threat that if he did not do so in three days, he would add a tail and other appendages and sell the picture to Mr. Hore, the wild beast exhibitor. Du Bost, another painter, went farther still. His case in some respects resembles that of Jacquet. Failing to get the price he asked for the picture of a gentleman and his wife, he exhibited it in Pall Mall as "Beauty and the Beast." The lady's brother whipped out his knife and cut it to pieces. He was sued for the value of it; but Lord Ellenborough decided that, the picture being a libel, the artist could only recover for the loss of the paint and canvas.

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A WEALTHY Manchester merchant engaged to pay a rising young artist a hundred guineas to paint his portrait. He asked how long it would take him. "About fifteen days," said the painter. The latter set to work so industriously, however, that he finished it in eleven days. Cræsus did not like this at all; for he considered himself cheated out of four days of the young man's services, and insisted that he should continue to work on the picture until the expiration of the fifteen

days. The painter did so, spending the time of the four extra sittings in lengthening, little by little, the ears in the portrait of his patron.

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ACCORDING to the recent decision in a lawsuit brought in Brussels by Jan Van Beers, the Flemish painter, against a critic, the allegation that photography is used in the production of a picture is not libellous and does not affect the honor of the painter. It is probable that the aid of the camera is called in by artists much more frequently than is supposed. Within reasonable bounds—the limits of which are obvious—I can see no reasonable objection to the practice. Up to within a year or two artistic photography was restricted to still-life. But since the introduction of gelatine plates and instantaneous shutters very natural and artistic studies from life have been produced. There are shops in Paris where are offered for sale not only studies of trees, rocks, bits of foreground, cattle, and sheep, but figures in every pose in and-out of costume.

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THE John Wolfe collection of paintings to be sold soon at auction has deservedly attracted attention. It is something new to keep pictures on exhibition for such a long time before the sale as has been done in this case, although I should think that it is hardly good policy. To charge an admission fee on such occasions is another innovation, and rather a dangerous precedent. All sorts of made-up "collections" will now be given a spurious interest by the adoption of the idea; only the admission fee will probably be make-believe and not a reality. In this case of Mr. Wolfe's pictures no one could reasonably object to the charge. Certainly it is worth twenty-five cents to see his admirable "Fellah Woman," by Bonnat, his "Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn," by Piloty, and the famous "Nymphs and Faun," by Bouguereau. Besides these there are Cot's "Printemps," the well-known picture of the youth and maiden in a swing; Cabanel's "Birth of Venus," and "The Burning of Charles V.'s Bonds by Fugger the Banker," all popular paintings well known to nearly every one by the engravings of them.

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THERE is perhaps no private collector in America who has owned more famous modern paintings than Mr. Wolfe. Before the war, in his gallery were to be found Holman Hunt's "Light of the World," Leslie's "Anne Page and Slender," Couture's "Day Dreams," Frère's "Evening Prayer," and Hazen-clever's "New Pupil." But nearly twenty years ago he sold the collection which contained these, as he is selling now his Bonnat, Bouguereau, Cabanel, and the rest.

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It is hardly necessary to speak in detail of the pictures on exhibition, as I am reminded that the Wolfe gallery was criticised at length in THE ART AMATEUR about two years ago, by a more graphic pen than mine. Mr. Edward Strahan then wrote as follows of the "Nymphs and Faun": "Four or five life-size women of the woods have caught a goat-faced satyr at a disadvantage, and are pulling him into the water by the arms, the ears, and the horns. Here are forms of real rounded relief and precipitate action, a wonderful achievement for Bouguereau. Here are real, windy, balancing trees to form a dark relief for them; the whole combination of life and spirit being so striking that the eye, in high good humor, is ready to bear witness that the skins of the people are really, palpitating and compressible in this case—not Bouguereau parchments scraped down with a razor. The trouble with the picture is that the people are ladies—not Mœnads or Bacchantes. Their undressing is accidental, or prurient, not ignorant. Look at any of their faces and you feel that they need not insult your reason by pretending not to know how to write modern French and read the fashion newspapers."

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A SALE of miscellaneous coins at Bangs' recently occupied a whole week, but was only remarkable from the fact that all the rare pieces in the antique series were forgeries, although catalogued as genuine. That this was due to the ignorance of the collector there is no doubt. A numismatic expert on the second day of the sale pointed out a number of spurious coins, and they

were at once removed. All the pieces had been bur-nished until they looked like soldiers' uniform buttons. This I know is strictly according to Mr. W. C. Prime's advice in his wonderful little manual, "Hints to Young Collectors;" but let me whisper in the ears of collectors, young and old, that by pursuing this silly practice they rob their specimens of more than half their value.

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AFTER the very pronounced disagreement of the experts in the suit of Wertheimer versus Goode, in London, recently, as to the genuineness of certain parts of the decoration of the little pair of dilapidated Sèvres vases sold to the defendant for nearly five thousand dollars, connoisseurs in both hemispheres will be more than ever on their guard against deception. In the case in point there was no evidence of fraud, but that there should be even a reasonable doubt as to the authenticity of these poor little flower-pots for which thousands of dollars were paid, surely is enough to make every collector shake in his boots. There is not much interest in old Sèvres in this country, and but little of it is offered in the market. I called attention recently to the patched-up article de Sèvres (not old) mounted in silver which brought \$1125 at the Fales auction. But probably no London connoisseur would have been "taken in" by such a shallow pretence as that. There are other objets d'art besides old Sèvres about which many of our collectors are no less learnedly ignorant than those who buy old Sèvres mounted in metal of warranted "mediæval workmanship."

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SOME have taken to buying old European ivories lately, and that is very dangerous indeed. Genuine pieces of merit are too much in demand in trans-Atlantic museums and private collections to need a market here. An English dealer recently crossed the Atlantic to throw some of these treasures at the feet of our American buyers, and he left our shores some ten thousand dollars richer than he came here. He took handsome rooms in Fifth Avenue, kept away prying connoisseurs who did not mean business, quickly "coraled" his prey and made a good meal off them. One buyer was at first a little incredulous, and asked how it happened that such valuable ivories should be offered in New York when they could so easily be disposed of in Europe. The ready answer was that they were part of the private collection of a lady in the south of England who only parted with them on condition that they should not be sold in that country. The dealer might have been asked why he did not take them on the continent. France, for instance, offers a fine market for such treasures. But the inquirer apparently was satisfied, and now owns some of the precious ivories. I do not say that they are not genuine. By no means. I have not seen them, and therefore cannot pretend to judge. But I do say that the whole business is strongly open to suspicion.

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THE great attraction at the Morton-Hoe sale at Leavitt's was Regnault's imposing painting, "Automedon with the Horses of Achilles." To the disgrace of the city, many will think, no attempt was made to secure this celebrated work for the Metropolitan Museum; although there would have been little trouble in getting the money subscribed for such a purpose. A representative of the Corcoran gallery somewhat timidly bid for it, and Mr. Avery offered \$5800, meaning to send it back to France on speculation. But it was knocked down at \$5900 to Mr. S. A. Coale, Jr., for some St. Louis gentlemen who intend to present it to the Art Museum of that city.

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AT a recent delightful art reception at a well-known Fifth Avenue mansion, some of the guests walked the galleries armed with large magnifying glasses, by the aid of which they scrutinized the choicest paintings with all the business air of detectors of forged bank-notes. It is to be hoped that this fashion will not become general in our salons. The masterpiece of an artist, I venture to suggest, is hardly to be tested like a piece of merchandise. The fineness of the canvas, the quality of the impasto, and the microscopic fidelity in the rendering of details indeed are not the qualities which to the connoisseur give the painting its artistic value.

MONTEZUMA.